

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly Newscast

January 24th, 2014

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Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca



<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

CBC

News story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word	Definition
	1. evidence	a) competitors
	2. torture	b) size or extent
	3. opponents	c) people fighting for legal justice against accused criminals
	4. former	d) nations or groups that cooperate and support each other
	5. prosecutors	e) proof
	6. industrial	f) previous; before now
	7. scale	g) to say it is not true or it didn't happen
	8. allies	h) to cause pain and suffering
	9. deny	i) currently happening
	10. underway	j) large numbers, like a factory can produce

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

concentration camps – a guarded area where groups of people are unfairly held and live in poor conditions; usually during war time

civil war – a war within one country between competing groups

Listening Activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. A _____ has evidence showing the torture and killing of prisoners.	a) Syrian prisoner of war b) Syrian military police photographer
2. The 55,000 photographs were given to _____.	a) Assad's opponents b) Bashar al-Assad
3. Syrian officials could face _____.	a) civil charges b) war crimes charges
4. The photographs show "industrial scale killing" like _____.	a) concentration camps in World War II b) a factory in World War II
5. The US _____ say Assad has committed war crimes against his own people.	a) and its Western allies b) and Syrian officials
6. Assad has _____, saying he is fighting "terrorists."	a) committed war crimes b) denied committing war crimes

Discussion Question

Do you think other countries should get involved in a country's civil war?

News story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

governor (leader of a US state)	media (TV, radio, newspaper)	parliament (government)
praise (to say positive things)	exemplary (great example)	scold (to find fault)
speech (a prepared talk)	coverage (time or space in the media)	pay attention (focus on)

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

Knesset – the Hebrew word for gathering; where the Israeli government passes laws

1. When you are driving, you must _____ to the road, not talk on the phone.
2. Parents should _____ not _____ their children when they work hard and accomplish their goals.
3. An _____ student arrives on time and always has his/her homework done.
4. Arnold Schwarzenegger was the _____ of California from 2003 to 2011.
5. Many schools have _____ contests to help students become better public speakers.
6. Canada has a _____ building in the capital city of Ottawa.
7. The amount of _____ a story gets depends on how important it is to the viewers/listeners.
8. Which type of _____ do you use most often to get your news?

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **True** or **False**. Write your answer in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ The Alberta Premier has been visiting Israel this past week.
2. ____ The Israeli media did not focus much on Harper's visit.
3. ____ Harper's visit was on the front page of an Israeli newspaper.
4. ____ One Israeli reporter said Harper's speech was very friendly.
5. ____ Sarah Palin was the governor of Alaska.
6. ____ Palin thought the media gave too much attention to Harper's visit.

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Israelis were not interested in a speech from Stephen Harper? Do you think Canadians should pay more attention to problems between Israel and Palestine?

News story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Choose the group of synonyms (words with similar meaning) that best match each of the vocabulary words. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word from the Story	Related Words
	1) testing	a) persuade advise
	2) awareness	b) checking measuring
	3) encourage	c) knowledge about thinking about
	4) break down	d) more than greater than
	5) exceeding	e) rules for safety standards
	6) safety guidelines	f) knowledgeable people scientists
	7) experts	g) dissolve waste away

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

radon – (noun): a gas that is a health hazard due to its radioactivity

uranium – (noun): a metal element that is radioactive

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Read and answer the questions below. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. Which kinds of doctors are testing their homes for radon?
2. Why are these doctors testing their homes for radon??
3. How is radon produced?
4. Describe how radon smells and tastes?
5. What disease can radon cause?
6. Can you test for radon?

Discussion Questions

Have you ever heard of radon? Would you test your house for radon?

Language Focus

Noticing the 'be' verb

'be' – The verb **to be** is a very common verb in the English language. It is used in several different situations.

Common situations we use the 'be' verb:

1. To show the quality or state of someone or something
2. Simple Questions
3. To make the continuous/progressive tenses
4. To make the passive voice

Forms of the 'be' verb

Form	Subject	Present Tense	Past Tense	Question	Continuous/Progressive
1 st person	I	am	was	Am/Was I ready?	I am/was arguing.
2 nd person	you	are	were	Are/Were you a student?	You are/were hiding.
3 rd person	he/she/it	is	was	Is/Was she late?	He is/was praising us.
1 st person pl	we	are	were	Are/Were we tired?	We are/were playing.
3 rd person pl	they	are	were	Are/Were they here?	They are/were scolding.

Passive Voice - We focus on the action itself or on the object receiving the action, rather than who is doing it. The subject of the sentence receives the action.

Forming the passive voice: 'be' verb + **past participle** of the main verb

Example: The cookies **were eaten** by the children.

(The subject, cookies, did not eat themselves. The object, children, did the action, not the subject.)

Look at the following sentences from the first story. Which form of the 'be' verb are they using?

Answers are in the appendix.

1. 55,000 images **were** given by the photographer, who left Syria after giving the pictures to Assad's opponents.
2. One of the prosecutors said the evidence showed "industrial scale killing" that **was** like Second World War concentration camps.
3. Assad has denied war crimes, saying he **is** fighting "terrorists".
4. Syrian peace talks **are** underway in Switzerland.

Transcripts of Weekly News Stories

	JANUARY 24 TH WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, I'm Carla Beynon and this is Learning English with CBC for the week of January 24 th .	0:00
Story 1	A Syrian military police photographer has evidence showing the torture and killing of about 11,000 prisoners. 55,000 images were given by the photographer, who left Syria after giving the pictures to Assad's opponents. Former war crimes prosecutors say Syrian officials could face war crimes charges. One of the prosecutors said the evidence showed "industrial scale killing" that was like Second World War concentration camps. The photographs increase the pressure on Assad, who the United States and its Western allies say has committed war crimes against his own people during the civil war. Assad has denied war crimes, saying he is fighting "terrorists". Syrian peace talks are underway in Switzerland.	0:11
Story 2	Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been visiting Israel this past week. But Harper's Israel visit did not get much attention from the Israeli media; his visit was not on the front page of any Israeli newspaper and got little coverage on radio or TV. The media reported a few lines from his speech to the Israeli parliament, with one newspaper calling it, "one of the friendliest speeches of support ever heard from the leader of a foreign country in the Knesset." Former Alaska governor and vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin is praising Harper for what she calls his "exemplary" support of Israel and scolding the media for not paying more attention to his visit.	1:11
Story 3	Cancer doctors and researchers in Calgary are testing their homes for a deadly gas called radon. They are hoping their tests will raise awareness and encourage others to do the same. Radon is produced naturally when uranium in soil breaks down. You can't see it, taste it or smell it. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer in Canada and nearly half of Prairie homes have amounts exceeding Health Canada's safety guidelines. The experts want people to know there is a way to test for radon gas. The test is cheap, simple to use and can be found at most local hardware stores.	2:02

Appendix - Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary

Answer	Word	Definition
e	1. evidence	a) competitors
h	2. torture	b) size or extent
a	3. opponents	c) people fighting for legal justice against accused criminals
f	4. former	d) nations or groups that cooperate and support each other
c	5. prosecutors	e) proof
j	6. industrial	f) previous; before now
b	7. scale	g) to say it is not true or it didn't happen
d	8. allies	h) to cause pain and suffering
g	9. deny	i) currently happening
i	10. underway	j) large numbers, like a factory can produce

Listening

1. A _____ has evidence showing the torture and killing of prisoners.	a) Syrian prisoner of war b) Syrian military police photographer
2. The 55,000 photographs were given to _____.	a) Assad's opponents b) Bashar al-Assad
3. Syrian officials could face _____.	a) civil charges b) war crimes charges
4. The photographs show "industrial scale killing" like _____.	a) concentration camps in World War II b) a factory in World War II
5. The US _____ say Assad has committed war crimes against his own people.	a) and its Western allies b) and Syrian officials
6. Assad has _____, saying he is fighting "terrorists."	a) committed war crimes b) denied committing war crimes

News story 2

Vocabulary

1. When you are driving, you must pay attention to the road, not talk on the phone.
2. Parents should praise not scold their children when they work hard and accomplish their goals.
3. An exemplary student arrives on time and always has his/her homework done.
4. Arnold Schwarzenegger was the governor of California from 2003 to 2011.
5. Many schools have speech contests to help students become better public speakers.

6. Canada has a parliament building in the capital city of Ottawa.
7. The amount of coverage a story gets depends on how important it is to the viewers/listeners.
8. Which type of media do you use most often to get your news?

Listening

1. F The Alberta Premier has been visiting Israel this past week.
2. T The Israeli media did not focus much on Harper's visit.
3. F Harper's visit was on the front page of an Israeli newspaper.
4. T One Israeli reporter said Harper's speech was very friendly.
5. T Sarah Palin was the governor of Alaska.
6. F Palin thought the media gave too much attention to Harper's visit.

News story 3

Vocabulary

Answer	Word from the Story	Related Words
b	1) testing	a) persuade advise
c	2) awareness	b) checking measuring
a	3) encourage	c) knowledge about thinking about
g	4) break down	d) more than greater than
d	5) exceeding	e) rules for safety standards
e	6) safety guidelines	f) knowledgeable people scientists
g	7) experts	g) dissolve waste away

Listening

1. Which kinds of doctors are testing their homes for radon? Cancer doctors and researchers
2. Why are these doctors testing their homes for radon? TO encourage others to test their homes.
3. How is radon produced? When uranium in soil breaks down radon is produced.

4. Describe how radon smells and tastes? It has no taste and no smell.
5. What disease can radon cause? It can cause lung cancer.
6. Can you test for radon? Yes you can.

Language Focus

1. 55,000 images **were given** by the photographer, who left Syria after giving the pictures to Assad's opponents.

4. To make the passive voice

2. One of the prosecutors said the evidence showed "industrial scale killing" that **was** like Second World War concentration camps.

1. To show the quality or state of someone or something

3. Assad has denied war crimes, saying he **is fighting** "terrorists".

3. To make the continuous/ progressive tenses

4. Syrian peace talks **are** underway in Switzerland.

1. To show the quality or state of someone or something